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ON THE DENIAL OF CHRIST:

A Sermon

BY THE REV. JOHN A. CLARK,

ASSISTANT MINISTER OF CHRIST CHURCH, NEW YORK.

Matt. 26, 74.—"*I know not the man.*"

THE religion of the Cross imparts true dignity and elevation to the human character. It lifts the frail, erring creature, *man*, from the dust, and binds him with a golden link to the great, eternal GOD. Having brought him into this exalted connection, it exerts a regenerating and purifying influence upon his nature, awakens in his soul and engrafts upon his character all that is generous, and great, and good.

This religion spreads a charm over life—bereaves the grave of its terrors, and opens the prospect of future and unending bliss upon the delighted gaze. There is so much that is lovely and valuable connected with the hopes and promises of the Gospel, that if a wish or a sigh could make men Christians, the efforts of the minister of JESUS CHRIST, we doubt not, would be attended with unbounded success, and he would soon see the whole world ranging themselves under the banner of the Cross.

The blessings offered by the Gospel are desired by all, but the terms upon which they are offered are exceedingly disliked. Could men become partakers of the hopes of the Gospel of CHRIST, and at the same time retain their sinful attachments, and be allowed their sinful indulgences, they would glory in the name of Christians. But the very first advance toward the

Christian character consists in an entire and eternal renunciation of sin. The grand object for which the Son of GOD visited our earth —for which he chose for himself out of this world's polluted population a people, was, that he might *save them from their sins, redeem them from all iniquity*, and render them in this respect *a peculiar people.* JESUS CHRIST never did—and never will, save a man *in his sins.* The gate of Heaven will eternally remain closed upon every soul that is not *saved from sin.* Sin must be parted with, abandoned, renounced.

This abandonment and renunciation of sin, is often attended with pain, and temporary inconvenience. It may involve us in great trials, and subject us to numerous sacrifices. Rather than encounter these difficulties, and submit to these evils, many are disposed to disclaim all connection with CHRIST, and say with the unfortunate disciple whose words, uttered upon one of the most memorable and unhappy occasions of his life, have been announced as our text—*I know not the man.*

Previous to delineating those several classes of individuals, who, like Peter, deny CHRIST, I wish to call your attention to the consideration of *the sin of this deliberate denial of the* Savior, and *the causes that lead to it.*

I. *The sin of denying* CHRIST.—We should never lose sight of the fact, that in accomplishing the work of our salvation, CHRIST stooped from an amazing height, and voluntarily encountered labor, shame, danger and death—if *He put on the form of a servant*, it was for our sakes. If *He became of no reputation*, it was to render it possible for us to become the honored sons and daughters of GOD ALMIGHTY. If *He humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross*, it was for our salvation and eternal rescue.

On this very account GOD determined *highly to exalt Him—to give Him a name above every name*, to *have all men honor Him, even as they honor the Father.*—Hence, also, much importance is attached to an open and fearless confession of CHRIST. This confession is indeed laid down as one of the terms upon which salvation is suspended—"If thou wilt confess with thy mouth the Lord JESUS, and believe in thine heart that GOD raised

Him from the dead, *thou shalt be saved;* for with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." And the Savior himself held out the promise of life on the same terms—"Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father, which is in Heaven."

Not to confess CHRIST, is to withhold from him the honor due to his adorable nature—an act on our part fraught with deep and peculiar guilt, inasmuch as it was for our sakes that he disrobed himself of the splendors, and shrouded, beneath a veil of flesh, the majesty, of the eternal GODHEAD.

To deny CHRIST, then, would evince a depth of ingratitude, and fix upon the character a degree of guilt, which no language can adequately express. And the Savior himself hath forewarned us of the dreadful consequence of such a denial. "Whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in Heaven." And St. Paul, alluding to this declaration, joins to it his testimony—"it is a faithful saying, if *we deny Him, He also will deny us.*" But,

II. What are the causes that lead men to deny CHRIST?

Why did Peter deny the Savior?

It was not because he had not witnessed sufficient evidence of *his divine power*, and *his unquestionable claim to the character of a teacher sent from* GOD.

No: he had been one of the most highly privileged of all the apostles. He had seen the eyes of the blind opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. He had seen the loathsome leprosy driven from the body by a single volition—and the chains which demons had rivetted upon the soul, broken by a word. He had seen the lame, at the bidding of JESUS, leap as an hart, and heard the tongue of the dumb to sing. He was one of the three permitted to accompany the Redeemer to the place of his transfiguration, where he beheld his face shining like the sun, and his raiment lustrous and effulgent as the light. He was one of those that stood before the tomb of Lazarus, listening to the voice of the Son of GOD as it echoed through the still and noiseless cells of that subterranean abode, and witnessed the wondrous scene that ensued—that of a dead man starting up and coming forth, at the Savior's summons, attired in grave clothes.

Peter was fully convinced of the Divine character of JESUS. This, on a memorable occasion, he had distinctly avowed, *Thou art the* CHRIST, *the Son of the living* GOD.

His denial of CHRIST was not owing to any want of ardent and devoted attachment to Him—he had forsaken all to follow JESUS, and on numerous occasions evinced the most affectionate regard for him. Such was the ardor of his attachment and the fervor of his feelings, that in the presence of all the disciples, he had most positively assured his Divine master, *though I die with thee, yet will I not deny thee.* How little can we calculate when all things go on well and prosperously with us, how we shall feel and act in the dark hour of adversity and trial!

This confident declaration of Peter was uttered in the moment of fervid feeling, when no danger was near.

But now unexpected events had transpired. Things had undergone a great change. JESUS had been arrested upon charges of high misdemeanor, and dragged by a rough band of soldiers, like a guilty culprit, to the hall of Pilate. Under these circumstances, no man could be recognised as his follower or adherent, without encountering danger and disgrace. Hence his disciples all forsook him and fled.

Where now was devoted and magnanimous Peter? What had become of all his high and bold resolves? He is seen *following* JESUS *afar off.* At length he cautiously approaches the place of his master's confinement, and after many misgivings, ventures to enter one of the outer apartments. There a servant "maid looked at him, and said, thou also wast with JESUS of Nazareth, and he denied and said, *I know not the man.*"

The fear of *danger* and *disgrace* seems to have operated most powerfully upon his mind—for his connection with JESUS was insisted upon, at three different times, and at each of those times positively denied, and the last denial accompanied with a solemn oath. This, however, is not a solitary or singular case. Peter has had more to imitate him in his denial of JESUS, than to follow him in his subsequent penitence and contrition. It will be found that the fear of danger or disgrace—an unwillingness to suffer or submit to sacrifices for CHRIST, are among the most prominent and frequent causes that lead men to deny the Savior.

III. CHRIST *is denied by his followers in numerous instances and in a variety of ways.*

1. Where the general characteristics of Christianity do not appear in their conduct.

Soon after the resurrection, when two distinguished disciples were brought before the Jewish Sanhedrim, we are told, that the persons constituting that judicial assembly, *took knowledge of them, that they had been with* JESUS.

No man who *has been with* JESUS, can have intercourse with the world without imparting to all around him a knowledge of this fact. The mechanic no sooner discloses, by those ten thousand little allusions and associations, his calling; nor the man of law his profession, than the Christian, by a subdued and chastened spirit, a meek and heavenly temper—desires, hopes and expectations, that constantly look away from this sublunary scene to the eternal world—a soul that seems imbued in all its thoughts and affections with the very sentiments that animate the seraphic host around the throne—and by a strict regard in all his conduct to the will of his Heavenly Father—the fact, that he *has been with* JESUS. The spirit which animates, and the maxims which govern him, are altogether different from the spirit which animates, and the maxims which govern the world.

He acts from the steady and fixed principle of *right*—the world, from the steady and fixed principle of *interest.* Consequently on a theatre like this, where *interest* is the great moving principle, and where so many interests are continually conflicting, the man, who in all things is governed by the changeless principle of right, will doubtless have to submit to sacrifices. In a world like this, where there is so little relish for holiness, and where the very name of GOD and Heaven strikes upon the ear like a jarring and inharmonious note, it is no wonder if he, whose conversation is in Heaven, and whose every word breathes of hopes anchored in the eternal throne, should be looked upon as a strange and singular character—and should become the butt of ridicule and the subject of derision among the frivolous and profane.

If, therefore, a man kneels at the altar, and there vowing eternal allegiance to the Savior, does not, when he leaves that altar,

carry along with him into the world the spirit of CHRIST, and the maxims of his pure and holy religion for the regulation of his conduct, his deportment will soon show it. If earthly objects have the ascendancy in his affections—if this world's favor and its gain be the things to which he principally looks, the distinctive marks of Christianity will be no longer discoverable in his character—and on his doings will be written, in broad and legible lines, *I know not the man*,—I know not JESUS of Nazareth.

2. *Worldly conformity*, in those who profess to be the followers of CHRIST, is a direct denial of him.

Unhappily for the cause of CHRIST, there are not wanting in the Church, at the present day, instances of men *who have left their first love*—of individuals, who set out in the Christian path with fervor and engagedness, but have speedily turned aside, and gone back to the very spirit and round of worldliness that formerly distinguished them. The worst feature in their case, however, is that they think they are still Christians.

The class of persons to whom I refer, pursue the vain and empty things of the world with the same avidity—are equally infatuated with its pomp and pageantry—and are just as ready to sacrifice principle and duty, when they stand in their way to wealth, distinction, and pleasure, as their unrenewed neighbors, who lay no claim to the Christian character. In all their deportment, conversation, and pursuits, there is such a constant reference to things present and temporal, that it is abundantly evident that the world and its favor are the supreme objects of their thoughts and affections.

And yet once it was far otherwise with them. Once they knew no happiness comparable to that of sitting at the feet of JESUS, and waiting to feast upon the smiles of his countenance. Then, in the ardor of their attachment to the Savior, with Peter they would have exclaimed—"though I die with thee, yet will I not deny thee." Yet now such a worldliness sits upon all their actions that no one would imagine that they had ever been with JESUS.—In the awful dereliction, stamped upon their conduct may be read in letters of sunbeam—*I know not the man.*

They did not go all these fearful lengths at once. Their

apostacy was progressive and imperceptible, of which they themselves were almost unconscious. Peter at first followed JESUS afar off. Then he faintly, and with evident compunction, denied Him. But at last—such is the progressive and continually augmenting force which sin acquires—he boldly affirmed, and that with an oath—*I know not the man.*

This is the history of thousands. They begin with the neglect of some known duty. Perhaps it is prayer. The Christian who is not a man of prayer may expect to fall—may calculate with the utmost certainty upon growing cold and careless. The Most High has promised His heavenly grace upon the sole condition of prayer. Prayer is the food upon which the soul subsists, the wings with which the Christian flies to Heaven. Take away this food, and the divine life expires—take away these wings, and the believer no more visits the celestial court—no more beholds the face of his heavenly Father—no longer loves the place of his habitation. Prayer is the means by, and the medium through, which we commence and carry on an acquaintance with GOD,—the act by which we acknowledge CHRIST as our mediator. The neglect of it, therefore, is a virtual denial of Him—a tacit declaration to our families and children that we *know Him not.*

Observe the character of that man who, day after day, retires to his rest and rises from his couch without lifting up his thoughts in devotion to GOD. Though a professed follower of CHRIST, no one would imagine it from any thing discoverable in his conduct or conversation. An entire worldliness, an apparent utter forgetfulness of GOD, is stamped upon his whole demeanor. His course on to this fearful and far gone alienation was gradual and progressive. With the neglect of prayer he began to grow more familiar with sin. At first he tremulously approached the line that separates right from wrong; drawn by passion or allured by pleasure he crossed that line, designing immediately to return—but around him gathered pleasures more fascinating, and still more fascinating. By little and little he yielded to the soft and alluring blandishments of sin—the world by degrees acquired a higher and higher ascendancy over his affections—the thoughts

of GOD came less and less frequently into his mind—the glorious image of CHRIST began to grow dim—and the salvation He wrought diminished in his view—till at length, in this downward progressive course, all love to the Savior expired.

Ah, have I not been narrating the history of several individuals in this very assembly? They went on by imperceptible degrees. The chains that bound them were invisible, and the hand that rivetted those chains, unseen. Had they, however, in the beginning, heeded the voice that warned them of danger—had they been less self-confident, less self-presuming—had they been more watchful, more conscious of their need of divine assistance—had they looked more frequently to GOD for guidance and direction, and kept more closely at the feet of the Redeemer—the world would never have gained such an ascendancy over their affections, nor led them into a train of doings which have ten thousand tongues, all clamorous in the declaration—*I know not the man*, I know not JESUS of Nazareth. If any such fallen Christian be now within these walls, let him remember the unaltered and unalterable decision of the Savior—"whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in Heaven."

3. *They who profess to be followers of the Cross, cannot depart from the exalted standard of morality exhibited in the Gospel, without denying* CHRIST.

In Him resides supreme legislative power. He has enacted various laws for the regulation of our conduct. Every act of injustice, every deviation from strict rectitude, every delinquency in moral duty, every aberration from the path of holiness, is a direct infraction of those laws—and every such infraction speaks with deep and tremendous emphasis—*I know not the man*—I acknowledge not his authority—I submit not to his government.

4. *Again:* CHRIST *is denied by the coldness, apathy, and supineness* of many who *profess to be his followers.*

They, in whose hearts the principle of divine life exists in freshness and unimpaired vigor, are distinguished by their devotedness to the Savior—their zeal and engagedness in the extension of his kingdom—and their tender anxiety and deep solicitude for the salvation of their fellow men. They imbibe his sentiments, and

become animated with the same spirit that glowed in his bosom. He was all activity—His love for perishing sinners was boundless —His estimate of the worth of the soul can be gathered from the emphatic and eloquent inquiry—"what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul—or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" To understand the full import of this inquiry, behold him expiring on the cross, pouring out his life in bitter agony, to rescue the immortal soul from death! Now they who profess to be his disciples, and neither feel nor manifest any deep interest in the beings around them that have been ransomed by his blood—they who do not stand forth and actively engage in some efficient operation—put their hand to some powerful moral enginery, designed and fitted to reclaim those beings from error and death,—by this very inaction and manifest indifference proclaim to the world, in language most unequivocal,—*I know not the man.*

5. *They deny* CHRIST *who are merely nominal Christians; refusing to honor Him by cordially embracing the offers of life, and observing the institutions of the Gospel.*

This description embraces a large class of individuals. For we live not in a *Pagan*, *Jewish* or *Mahometan*, but in a *Christian* country. The Christian religion is the religion of our fathers; most of us have been brought, in early infancy, within the Christian covenant, by the kind solicitude of our parents. Even from that early period, the elementary principles of the religion of the Cross have been instilled into our minds, and the proof of its divine origin placed in every attitude and aspect before us. We are convinced of its truth, and have a theoretic knowledge of its doctrines, and the terms upon which we can be saved.

But something more than this theoretic knowledge is necessary. Man must "believe with the *heart* unto righteousness." The ordinances and sacraments of the Gospel must be received, before any substantial evidence can be furnished of a sincere and honest intention to follow CHRIST. I appeal then to you, my hearers; have you in very truth embraced the overtures of mercy held out in the Gospel, and taken JESUS CHRIST for your Lord and Master? I am addressing numbers, who in infancy were brought to

the baptismal font, and solemnly consecrated to GOD. Frequent opportunities are furnished them, in the apostolic rite of Confirmation, and in the holy sacrament of the Lord's Supper, to declare their approbation of what their parents did for them in infancy—to declare that they are not ashamed of the Cross of CHRIST—that they are desirous of renouncing sinful habits, and commencing a life of holiness.

To neglect these opportunities—to pass by that solemn rite —to turn one's back upon that celestial banquet, is nothing short of an open and contemptuous denial of CHRIST.

Will you then, Oh, inconsiderate hearer, place the seal of contempt upon your parent's prayers and kindness—and avow that your holy dedication in baptism was a *useless, unmeaning* thing? Will you abjure your religion, set GOD at defiance, and say of your Savior—*I know not the man?*———You know not JESUS!——— *Your parents knew Him!*———and probably I am addressing some whose parents are no more. In their mortal hour JESUS stood by them and smoothed their dying pillow.——— Then as their eyes were closing in death——they sent their last sigh——their last prayer to Him for you. *That prayer* was heard: hence the ten thousand warnings that have been brought to your ear—the kind and constraining motives that have been continually held out to win you to his service. And yet—after all these—you are ready to avow, *I know not the man!*

Where—oh where shall I find colors to paint this ingratitude? The tears and prayers of dying parents disregarded—the kindness and entreaties of a dying Savior despised—his overtures of mercy rejected—His religion abjured—Himself disavowed, and all knowledge of Him disclaimed!

6. *They deny* CHRIST *who refuse to confess him before men.*

Although an empty profession will save no man, that disposition which leads men to withhold from the Savior the honor of publicly professing belief in Him, indicates a state of feeling hostile to his cause.

In reference to the subject before us, we are so situated that we can find no neutral ground on which to stand—our acts will either deny CHRIST, or proclaim us Christians. The Savior himself

has declared—"He that is not with me, is against me." *To be with* CHRIST, is to profess his name—to embrace the principles, and practice the duties of his religion. Whoever does not profess his name—embrace the principles, and practice the duties of his religion, *is against Him*—is saying to the world, *I know not the man.*

And who does not tremble to think of the vast number that stand thus arrayed against CHRIST?

Among this number, perhaps, is one who acknowledges the Bible to be the word of GOD—is conscious that if he should seek salvation he would obtain it—admits that GOD is now calling upon him to repent—and that to put off for a single day the work of reformation, is running a tremendous risk. This man sees and admits that he is a perishing sinner, and would fain fly to the foot of the Cross for safety, but for the principle that prompted Peter to deny CHRIST. He is surrounded by a circle of friends whom he holds in high esteem, and from whose society he derives much enjoyment. These friends, valuable as they are on account of their social qualities, are altogether men of the world, and place an exceeding low estimate upon religion. Their opinion of him would be instantly lowered should he take up the Cross—and, therefore, he does not—he will not take up that Cross. No: he will grieve the HOLY SPIRIT—slight the invitations of mercy—repel all our entreaties—shake off his convictions—and, though the bleeding Redeemer stands stretching his arms toward him, will openly avow, *I know not the man*, rather than suffer or submit to sacrifices for CHRIST.

Have I drawn the character of any individual in this house? Are there no lines in it resembling yours, my young friend? When the minister of GOD pressed upon you the kind and constraining motives which the Gospel furnishes to lead you to CHRIST—when he drew aside the curtain that shuts out eternity from human gaze, and the appalling spectacle of death with his tremendous scythe passed before you,—the eternal judgment seat rose to view—you beheld all nations gathered around it, and didst recognise yourself in that great assembly, shrinking away from the piercing, the all searching look of the Judge Eternal!—

why was it that tears then trickled down your cheeks, and the signs of deep emotion sat upon every line of your countenance? Ah, you then resolved to become a Christian.

But on the morrow, when you came in contact with the world —when its bewitching smiles were again spread before you, and your gay and thoughtless companions again clustered around you, all your firm resolves melted away, and your conduct from that time to the present has told the world—has told wondering angels —has told CHRIST, who will be your judge, *I know not the man.*

Others there may be, of less religious sensibility—who go not so far in conceding to the truth of Christianity—who are not avowed infidels, but whose notions upon all religious subjects are loose and unsettled. These men unblushingly declare that they know nothing of CHRIST, as a Savior. Strange anomaly! That men should live in a world ransomed by the blood of a Savior and know nothing of that Savior! That a divine and glorious Being should come from Heaven to save them from death, and they should spurn his offers, and avow that they *know him not.*

Are there any such unhappy individuals in this audience? With what language shall I address them?——*Ye know not the man!!*——Doubtless ye have heard of his lowly birth in Palestine. Ye have heard how he was buffeted and spit upon—how he was condemned, while Justice all the time cried—*I find no fault in him,*—how he was led around in mock majesty, having a reed in his hand, and a crown of thorns upon his head, and the clamorous mob shouted "*crucify Him, crucify Him!*" Have ye not seen him bearing on his shoulder the cross up the steep of Calvary—then nailed to that cross—and at last bowing his head in agony and death? Then the earth shook—the graves yawned—the rocks burst—and the sun hid himself! But all these indications of terror are not half so awful—all this contumely heaped upon the guiltless head of the Son of GOD, is not half so impious and heaven daring, as your cool and continued denial of the Savior!

Two reflections here forcibly present themselves.

1. If the train of reasoning pursued in this discourse be conclu-

sive, every individual to whom CHRIST is made known that does not immediately embrace his offers of life, and enter upon the duties He enjoins, is guilty of the sin of denying Him. It will then follow, that every individual in this assembly that is not in very deed a Christian, is daily denying his Savior. *This is one reflection.*

2. *The other* is—that these individuals who are thus denying their Savior are travelling as rapidly as the wheels of time can carry them to the tribunal of Him whom they are denying, and who has solemnly declared—"whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father, which is in Heaven."

Ah, in the eternal world you will know JESUS—and know Him not as a Savior, but as a Judge! The look that He cast upon Peter, after denying Him, was a look of love—but *it* melted his heart into penitence—shot conviction through his soul—and sent a freezing chill over his whole frame. If such be His look of love, what will be His look of wrath! how wilt thou, impenitent man, meet Him in the eternal world, clothed, as thou must be, with denials of Him as with a garment!

Peter said "I know not the man—and the LORD turned and *looked*—on Peter." Thou hast said, and art by all thy conduct still saying, *I know not the man.*

In that day—that great, tremendous day, "the LORD will turn and look upon thee"—and in his look thou wilt read thy destiny.

In that mute and speechless look thou wilt see enough to rive thy very heart. How will the recollection of the denials of thy LORD—of his goodness despised, and his long suffering contemned, then rush upon thy thoughts! Ah, how will thy heart then sink within thee—and thou look around in wild dismay for rocks to fall upon thee, and mountains to cover thee, from the presence of GOD and the LAMB!

Make not the awful experiment—but this instant fly to the presence of CHRIST—and own Him as your LORD and Savior.

ON THE OMNIPRESENCE OF GOD:

A Sermon

BY THE REV. SETH B. PADDOCK,
RECTOR OF CHRIST CHURCH, NORWICH, CONNECTICUT.

Proverbs xv. 3.—*The eyes of the* Lord *are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.*

The omnipresence of God is frequently asserted in Scripture, and may be clearly proved by reason. It is not so properly a particular attribute, as the assemblage of many attributes of infinite extent. It is that universal property by which he communicates being to all things, knows all things, upholds all things, and directs all things.

All creatures are the work of his hands. As no power can act where it is not, God must be in all places, because he acts in all. My Father worketh hitherto, says our Savior. Not a seed sprouts, not a creature is brought into existence unless God be present to give life and being. In calling things from nothing into existence, and disposing of them in such a manner that each might work for the good of the whole in the universal dominion, God must necessarily have looked through from their beginning to their end, and consequently known all possible events. The effects of bodies moving, whether by fixed laws, or by the instinct of animals, or by the will of intelligent creatures, were provided for in the counsels of eternity. The gentlest motion, even that of the air, known only by the sailing of the thistle's down, if unforeseen and its effects unprovided for, must have endangered the whole system, and completed, long before this, the destruction of the universe. But known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world. Not a sparrow falls to the ground, not a hair of our head is disturbed without his knowledge. Evidently the Being who knows all things, and whose knowledge is underived, must be present with all things. Whither can we go from His Spirit, or whither can we flee from his presence? Heaven and earth are full of Him.

God, who created, and who knows all things, still upholds them

by the word of His power. Without His protecting hand, the heavens would now pass away with a great noise, and the earth and the works that are therein would be destroyed. All things, each moment of their existence, depend on Him for preservation. Not a second breath could we draw, unless He were here to deal out another, as the present one passes away. Not a step could we take, unless he supplied us with new strength as the former was exhausted. In Him, all creatures live, and move, and have their being. Thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created, and thou renewest the face of the earth. Thou openest thy hand, they are filled with good. Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled. Thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust. It is hardly necessary to observe that the Being who supports all, must be present with all.

God also is the disposer of all events. He has provided for the effects of every motion of body, and of every act of His intelligent creatures, whether lawful or unlawful, in such a manner as he foresaw would answer some wise purpose in his government of providence or grace. The latter acting freely, are justified or condemned, according as they obey or disobey his laws, but the action, though *opposed* to his will, is made in the issue to further some gracious end in his administration. For he compelleth even the wrath of man to praise Him. Whether we live or die, whether we are visited with prosperity or with adversity, whether with health or with sickness, it is God alone who directs. Not that the conduct of man has no influence upon these events. Both Scripture and experience assure us that the happiness or misery of man depends much upon himself; but it is by the enforcement of that law of Heaven which ordains that certain acts shall ordinarily produce certain effects. A man's heart deviseth his way, but the Lord directeth his steps. Each of these prerogatives proves that God must be omnipresent.

And how majestic, awful, and glorious a Being must He be! Who can meditate upon this perfection without exclaiming with Zophar, "canst thou by searching find out God! Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is high as Heaven, what canst thou do? deeper than hell, what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than

the sea. There is nothing to which we can liken the immensity of GOD." "The earth is a point; the ocean a drop;" the universe an atom. Imagination looks with astonishment over the rolling worlds around us, and with self gratulation on the reach of its powers; but when attempting to scan the boundless extent of GOD's immensity, it is startled at the discovery of its shortsightedness, and with humility exclaims, "such knowledge is too wonderful for me;" it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Nay! the highest exalted angel cannot say, thus far extend the attributes of GOD, and no farther. Neither height nor depth, neither length nor breadth can measure them. How ought the contemplation of this subject to humble us under the mighty hand of GOD! Mankind, on viewing their possessions and superiority to many of their fellows, are too apt to feel, that they themselves are gods. Forgetful of Him who made them to differ from their brethren, they say, at least in heart, my hand and the might of my wisdom and power have gotten me these advantages. They practically deny that they are stewards of GOD, bound to promote His glory with the talents in their possession, and claim that as these talents are the reward of their own exertions, they have a right to dispose of them as they will. But let them measure themselves with the ALMIGHTY, and reflect that it is He from whom they have received all, who requires their obedience, and that He is present to take cognizance of their conduct, and will hold them responsible at the last great day, and their proud imaginations will be brought down. They will discover that the distance between them and the lowest of their race is altogether imperceptible, when compared with the distance between them and their GOD. Keeping this discovery in mind—and no man can be so insensible to his littleness as to exalt himself against GOD, or be puffed up by a consciousness of his superiority to his fellow men—he will be meek and lowly in spirit, looking upon all the family of Adam as his brethren, and ready to receive and practice that instruction, which is able to make him wise unto salvation.

The omnipresence of GOD should cause us to fear exceedingly the commission of sin. "We can never sin with security, but in a place where the eye of GOD cannot behold us. And where is that place? Had we a mind to escape his inspection, whither

should we go? Heaven is the seat of his glory, creation the scene of his providence, and the grave itself will be the theatre of his power; so that our efforts will be equally vain, whether we ascend or descend, or fly abroad upon the wings of the morning light. The arm of the ALMIGHTY will still at pleasure prevent, and be ready to arrest the fugitives in their progress. Darkness may, indeed, conceal us and our deeds from the sight of men; but the divine presence like that of the sun, turns night into day, and makes all things manifest before GOD."*

Bear in mind then, brethren, that GOD is ever with you. He is with you in your families: observing your tempers, disposition, and conduct, and whether in obedience to Him you are bringing up your children in his nurture and admonition, or suffering them to go thoughtlessly on in the broad road which leadeth to destruction. He is with you in your retirements. He withdraws with you to your chambers, and compasseth about your beds, watching whether you are glad, and willing to shut the world from your minds, when no longer necessarily connected with it, or whether you still meditate upon it, and trust in it, as your portion, your happiness, your GOD. He is with you in your employments. He enters your studies, seeing whether you are seeking that wisdom which cometh from above, or only that wisdom of the world, which is foolishness with him. He goes with you to your farms, marking whether you are most diligent to cultivate the earth which he has given for *your* use, or the heart, which he has required you at the same time to cultivate for *His* use. He accompanies you to your merchandize, noticing whether you depart from truth and honesty, or whether you do unto all men as you would they should do unto you. And does He, my brethren, think ye, behold you with indifference in these several situations! No! He observes all your doings and all your goings, that He may check your evil propensities, overrule your wicked deeds for the accomplishment of his own purposes, and that every mouth may be stopped, and himself justified, when he comes to judge his people, and pass sentence on the impenitent. His eyes are in every place,

* Home.

and, as they are too pure to behold iniquity without begetting in Him a resolve to pour out indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon the perpetrator, always remember that it is an evil, and will prove a bitter thing to sin against the LORD. The omnipresence of GOD is a copious source of encouragement and comfort to the righteous. The eyes of the LORD are in every place beholding the good. He notes down in His book of remembrance the silent aspirations of their hearts, the deeds of charity which are done in secret, the good purposes which perish without coming to light, and the sufferings visible to no eye but his own, which they endure for CHRIST's sake.

He beholds the good to *do* them good. He defends them from the ten thousand enemies which lie in wait for their souls. He pours the balm of consolation into their wounded spirits, in their troubles. He supplies all their wants, spiritual and temporal. He makes every event subservient to their best interest. He enables them to do and suffer cheerfully whatever he appoints to them, saying to them, "fear not, for I am with thee," "be not dismayed, for I am thy GOD; I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." Though it is appointed unto them, in common with others, once to die, though their spirit must return to Him that gave it, while its companion, the body, must moulder in the grave, or be spread abroad on the wings of the wind, yet will the eyes of the LORD see, and his power preserve and collect every part for a joyful resurrection, and an indissoluble reunion with the soul. What servant of GOD can reflect upon these things and ever be tempted to think it is in vain that I serve him. What servant of GOD can reflect upon these things, and not be happy, in any situation in which Providence may place him? He is as certainly under the eye and protection of GOD, as if he were the only being in the universe upon which he exercised his watchful care and benevolent affections.

The omnipresence of GOD should remind us of the gratitude due Him for His patience toward us, and for the gift of His Son. We cannot mingle with society without perceiving that the world lieth in wickedness. We cannot look into our own hearts without perceiving that there is much which does not often meet the public

eye. And yet owing to our blindness and partiality, we "see but in part." How exceedingly sinful, and almost beyond number, must our sins be in the sight of GOD, whose eyes are in every place? Without experience, who could imagine that so pure and just a Being would for a moment suffer such an abuse of His mercies, contempt of his authority, and defiance of his power? Yet GOD has not only spared us, but loaded us daily with his mercies. He has not only delayed to cut us off in our sins, but "provided a ransom" for us in the person of His only begotten Son. The mercies given us in him exceed all human computation. Had he so far removed our condemnation as to suffer us to sink down into endless sleep after this life, who, on contemplating the penalty incurred, would not have felt that he is justly bound to love him with his whole heart, and soul, and mind, and strength. But the purpose of GOD in CHRIST JESUS could not be limited to a negative blessing. He determined to raise us "from the death of sin to the life of righteousness; to remove from us all things offensive to Him, and fit us for the enjoyment of His glorious presence: to deliver us from hell, and admit us into the kingdom of heaven. Let these blessings be the subjects of our contemplation, adoration, and thanksgiving, day and night. Let us more closely examine our ways, and search our hearts, that we may more and more admire and adore the long-suffering of GOD in bearing with us, and his goodness in giving his Son to die for us, and let both have the designed effect and lead us to repentance.

If GOD be omnipresent, let us remember that he is in his holy temple. Veils of flesh and blood alone conceal him from our view. Could we open the eyes of our spirit, we should see Him as He is, a Spirit, filling the temple with his majesty. We should see JESUS CHRIST fulfilling his promise, and standing in the midst of us who are now gathered together in his name. Around him we should see the seraphim standing and covering themselves with their wings, in token of their unworthiness to appear in his glorious presence. With what lowliness does it become us, who are so far removed from their purity, to come before him, to implore the pardon of our numerous offences, and the continuance of his favors. Did we see things as they are, we should each exclaim with the prophet, "woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of

unclean lips, and yet mine eyes have seen the king, the Lord of Hosts." Great and glorious LORD GOD command one of thy seraphim to fly to us as he flew to him; bid him touch our mouths as he touched his, with "a live coal from off the altar," and in this day of grace and mercy, let him say to us as he said to him, "lo! this hath touched thy lips and thy iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged." Then shall our souls bless thee, and "all that is within us shall bless thy holy name." Then shall we no longer honor thee with our lips, while our heart is far from thee, but shall worship thee in spirit and in truth. Then, whatever thou callest us to do, or to suffer, we shall say, dispose of us and deal with us, LORD, according as seemeth to thee good.

And let us, my brethren, "take heed how we hear;" GOD is present to notice the reception which his word finds in our hearts. When Moses gave the law to the Israelites, they feared greatly and trembled, because sensible that they were in the presence of their GOD. They saw his lightnings and heard his thunderings, and scarcely had he begun to promulgate his laws when all hearts were united, and all Sinai echoed with one voice, saying, all that thou hast spoken, we will do. Let us remember that GOD is here, and addresses us through his holy word, as certainly as he did them; that we stand before him as guilty creatures, seeking pardon, as blinded creatures seeking light, as ruined creatures seeking salvation. Let us, therefore, never depart from his holy temple, and forget what manner of persons he has declared us to be, and what we must do to inherit eternal life. Let us always enter it with a spirit of reverence, of penitence, of thanksgiving, of devotion, and of attention, fully realizing that GOD is here. Let us always leave it, bearing some new portion of grace, some better established doctrine, some clearer view of duty, some new desires after heaven, some firmer resolution of forsaking our evil ways, and of returning to our GOD, some increased anxiety of redeeming the time that is past, by meeting him in future with hearts less polluted by sin, and more devoted to his glory.

Let us, in short, not only here, but every where, remember that the eyes of the LORD are in every place beholding the evil and the good, and let our whole conduct be regulated with a view to the account which we are to render.

RIGHT REV. NATHANIEL BOWEN, D. D.,

BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE OF SOUTH CAROLINA.

THIS Right Reverend Prelate was consecrated in Christ Church, in the city of Philadelphia, on Thursday, October 8th, 1818, by the Right Rev. WILLIAM WHITE, Bishop of Pennsylvania. The Right Rev. JOHN HENRY HOBART, Bishop of New York, the Right Rev. JAMES KEMP, Bishop of Maryland, and the Right Rev. JOHN CROES, Bishop of New Jersey, being present, and assisting.